

# St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy

## Anti-Bullying Policy



**Guided by Jesus' love and example, we use our gifts to grow,  
pray and learn as a community;  
united in faith.**

*For I know the plans I have for you; plans to give you hope and a future – Jeremiah 29:11*

**Approved by:** Angelina Brett

**Date:** December 2022

**Last reviewed on:** December 2022

**Next review due by:** December 2024

## **Statement of Intent:**

At St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy we believe that all pupils are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment and we are very aware of the possible consequences of bullying. This policy outlines that we strive to address the negative effect that such experiences may have on both pupils and staff within the school.

In accordance with our Mission Statement we pledge through our Christian ethos, our school curriculum, our employment practice of management of incidents, to keep pupils and staff safe from bullying in any of its forms.

This policy has been written having due regard to all the relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to the, Education and Inspections Act 2006, Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998, Education Act 2011, DFE Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017 and DFE Mental Health & Wellbeing Provision in Schools 2018.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies e.g. Behaviour, Health and Safety, Safeguarding Policy, Mental Health Policy, Acceptable Use Policy (Internet and e mail). Through these policies we strive to build a school community where bullying is not tolerated.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY**

- To raise awareness of bullying
- To bring about conditions in which bullying is less likely to happen in the future
- To ensure a whole school approach to bullying
- To reduce and if possible, eradicate instances of all types of bullying

## **STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES**

a. We, at St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy, seek to provide a safe, secure and positive environment in which children and adults can grow and develop, making full use of the range of facilities available to them.

b. We are committed to a value system within which children and adults involved with them are entitled to be treated with respect and understanding and to participate without fear of intimidation. Any behaviour that undermines this is unacceptable.

c. We seek to ensure that those acting on behalf of our school will:

- Actively listen to children
- Take concerns seriously
- Investigate matters
- Be there to help and support

d. All our children have the right to feel secure, to be able to trust without fear, and to expect protection from adults in positions of care and responsibility. They also have a basic right to take full part in their education in an environment that does not subject them to cruelty or create despair.

e. All bullying is unacceptable, regardless of how it is delivered or what excuses are given to justify it.

f. Victims of bullying will be treated in a supportive manner, and their case heard in an atmosphere of positive concern.

## **WHAT IS BULLYING?**

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

(Preventing and Tackling Bullying, DfE, July 2017)

Although there are a number of definitions of bullying, these definitions would include the following characteristics:

- It tends to be repetitive (**Several Times On Purpose - STOP**)
- It involves an imbalance of power
- It may be verbal, physical or psychological

Bullying is an antisocial behaviour. We must respond in a way which will help the bullies improve their behaviour. Increasing their anxiety and alienation from us is not likely to work.

## **Friendship issues, relational conflict and bullying behaviour**

We acknowledge that friendship problems and bullying behaviour can be upsetting for both pupils and parents and carers, but it is important to distinguish between the two, as the responses to friendship problems will be different to the strategies used to address bullying behaviour.

Pupils will fall in and out with each other, have arguments, stop talking to each other and have disagreements. This relational conflict can be a normal part of growing up. During a relational conflict or friendship problem groups of pupils may disagree, be very upset and find it difficult to resolve the disagreement without adult help. It is unlikely however, to be repeated behaviour and may even be accidental, but pupils will make an effort to resolve the problem and will want to resolve the problem.

However, we recognise that repeated friendship problems or relational conflict can sometimes lead to bullying behaviour particularly when there is an imbalance of power [when a group acts against an individual for example].

We help children to distinguish between isolated friendship issues and incidents defined as bullying by applying the **STOP** test – **S**everal **T**imes **O**n **P**urpose.

## **FORMS OF BULLYING/BULLYING BEHAVIOUR**

Bullying can take many different forms:

- Cyberbullying\*: e.g. chat-room/ blogs/message board, email, gaming console, 'happy slapping', Instant messaging (MSN, WhatsApp), mobile phones including photos, social network site e.g. Facebook, Snapchat, video hosting sites (YouTube), webcam, Instagram
- Damage to property: e.g. graffiti, personal property
- Inciting others to bullying behaviour e.g. encouraging pupils with special educational needs/vulnerable children/vulnerable children to bully others so that they receive the consequences rather than the instigator
- Literature: e.g. distribution/possession of posters/leaflets/notes, literature or material.
- Physical hurt/attack: e.g. physical intimidation, mimicry, unwanted or inappropriate touching
- Psychological: e.g. damage to reputation (sexual, denial of identity, gender/ethnicity), extortion of belongings, identity theft / impersonation, isolation/refusal to work/play with other pupil, revealing personal information, threats
- Verbal: e.g. 'joke' making, mimicry/ridicule, name calling, spreading rumours, swearing, verbal abuse, gossiping
- Victimisation after previous complaint e.g. bullying due to either victims or bystanders speaking out as a result of a past bullying incident.

## **TYPES OF BULLYING**

Bullying can happen for a large number of reasons and the most common are listed below:

- Related to disability, SEN or health - behaviour perceived to be insulting to people with a range of medical, mobility, sensory, mental health or learning impairments. Incidents related to other health or Special Educational Needs come under this heading too.
- Related to home circumstances (e.g. young carers or children in care)
- Homophobic\* - any incident perceived by the alleged victim or any other person to be targeted around being lesbian, gay or bisexual. People do not have to be lesbian, gay or bisexual to suffer homophobic bullying.
- Racist\* - any incident perceived to be racist by the alleged victim or any other person. Incidents related to religion, culture or those involving pupils who identify as Gypsy/Roma traveller come under this heading too.
- Sexist (incidents perceived to be demeaning to a gender in general. If unchallenged this can eventually lead to domestic violence)

- Sexual (incidents include intrusive language, damage to sexual reputation, inappropriate touching and other behaviour perceived to involve unwanted sexual attention)
- Transphobic (incidents are those perceived to be insulting to someone's gender identity or to transgendered people)

There are different types of bullies and victims:

- Aggressive bullies- physically aggressive individuals or bully groups
- Anxious bullies- children recruited into bully gangs by intimidation
- Victim bullies- children often victims at home and bullies at school
- Passive victims- children with poor social skills/are unassertive
- Provocative victims - children who bring out the worst in other children.
  - Often have poor relationships with primary carers.
  - Can be attention seeking.
- Attention seeking victims - Children with good social skills who deliberately seek the kudos of being a victim.

## **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF BULLYING**

Signs of bullying can be extremely variable and will very much depend on the individual. It is important, however, that parents/carers and school staff are aware of the signs and symptoms associated with bullying so that they can identify possible problems. The more common signs include:

- Physical signs e.g. Physical injuries, damaged clothing with no convincing explanation and general ill-health due to stress
- Emotional signs e.g. mood swings, apparent changes in personality, constant anxiety/nervousness, depression or tearfulness for no apparent reason, lack of confidence, negative self-image, hostility and defensiveness
- Behavioural signs e.g. withdrawn, frequent, unexplained absences, poor concentration, eating disorders, alcohol/substance misuse, evidence of self-harming and disruptive/challenging/bullying behaviour
- General e.g. frequently “lose” money/possessions, appears tired and lethargic, avoids entering/leaving school with others.

It should be stated that usually victims of bullying become so through no fault or action of their own. However, on occasion, it is important to recognise that there can be different types of victims because they:

- Are new to the class
- Are different in appearance, speech or background from other people
- Suffer from low self-esteem (but this is not clear whether this is the cause or effect of bullying).

## **PREVENTING BULLYING**

Through the following preventative strategies and planned curricular opportunities we hope to lay the foundations of positive behaviour and to eliminate bullying before it becomes an issue:

- Raising awareness through Anti-Bullying Week, assemblies and regular PSHE lessons
- Mission Week at the start of each academic year to highlight and embed the mission statement of the school
- Clear Anti-Bullying policy which all members of the school are aware of
- Anti-Bullying message embedded throughout the curriculum (including RE) and through Anti-bullying week in November each year
- Reward system for positive behaviour
- Circle Time – opportunities for children to discuss sensitive issues in a safe environment
- Buddy system for new children and those struggling with friendships
- Liturgies
- Learning Mentor role to supervise and model play during lunchtimes
- Pupil consultation – through questionnaires and School and Class Council
- Positive role models reflected through staff behaviour
- Ethos of the school

## **RESPONDING TO BULLYING**

### **RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS**

Bullying allegations can come from a number of different sources including from the child, child's friends, parent/carer or staff member. All allegations will be listened to, taken seriously and acted upon. Allegations can be made face to face e.g. a child reporting directly to a member of staff, or indirectly via the worry box, or through our buddy systems and class or school council.

### **RESPONDING TO BULLYING INCIDENTS**

When bullying has been alleged, reported or observed then the following steps will be taken (STAGE 1):

1. **INVESTIGATION:** When a teacher finds out that bullying has happened s/he starts by talking to the victim about his/her feelings. Lead adult will add this to Edukey. It is at this point a judgement is to be made as to whether bullying has occurred or not. Parents of all parties are informed.
2. **CONVENE A MEETING:** The teacher arranges to meet with the pupils who have been involved, this may include bystanders. The victim must give permission for this to take place and feel easy about it. The meeting will include bystanders or colluders who joined

3. **EXPLAIN THE PROBLEM:** The teacher tells them/the perpetrator about the way the victim is feeling and might use the victim's poem, piece of writing or drawing to emphasise his/her distress. At no time does the teacher discuss the details of the incidents.
4. **SHARE RESPONSIBILITY:** In cases of group bullying the teacher does not attribute blame but states that they know that the group are responsible and can do something about it.
5. **ASK THE GROUP/INDIVIDUAL FOR IDEAS:** The perpetrator or each member of the group is encouraged to suggest a way in which the victim could be helped to feel happier. The teacher gives some positive responses but will not go on to extract a promise of improved behaviour.
6. **SHARED RESPONSIBILITY:** The teacher ends the meeting by passing the responsibility to the group to solve the problem. They arrange to meet with them again to see how things are going on. Add all actions and next steps agreed onto Edukey.
7. **FOLLOW UP MEETING:** A week later the teacher discusses with each pupil, including the victim, how things have been going. They arrange to meet with them again to see how things are going on. Add to Edukey.

The above procedure is Stage 1. During Stage 1, all adults who come into contact with the children are informed. Additional supervision is put into place if required. If the situation is not resolved, after following this process and the behaviour continues, then the following stages are considered:

**STAGE 2:** Contact parent/carer and convene a meeting to discuss the above. Decide if any sanctions need to be applied in line with the school behaviour policy

**STAGE 3:** Contact other agencies e.g. Behaviour Support Team, Educational Psychologist, Police (If a child is over 10 years of age they are criminally responsible). Complete form 4 (Confirmed Bullying Incident Reporting Form)

**STAGE 4:** Put a Personal Support Plan (PSP) in place possibly leading to fixed term exclusion.

## **RECORDING AND REPORTING INCIDENTS**

Children know to speak to an adult about their concerns and that they should do so as soon as possible. There are posters in every classroom and in communal areas reminding children who they can speak to. All staff know to record and report incidents on Edukey.

Parents must contact their child's class teacher if they are concerned that their child is being bullied. This can be done through their home/school diary or by making an appointment to speak to the teacher.

If parents are concerned that their child is being bullied by an adult in school, they should contact the Head Teacher who will carry out an investigation and report back within the same week.

Incidents will be monitored on a weekly basis with the class teacher to identify patterns of behavior over time, triggers for bullying and to assess whether the behavior incidents constitutes bullying.

If this incident involves racist or homophobic language this is also logged and reported to the Local Governing Body.

## **PREJUDICE RELATED INCIDENTS**

A prejudice related incident is one involving for example racist graffiti or homophobic language, which needs to be addressed but may not constitute bullying because it is not repeated, not intentional or not directed at an individual. These incidents often involve the same behaviour as that included in the 'types of bullying' section. An incident may be a prejudice-related incident or a bullying incident or both. These incidents are also logged on Edukey.

## **BULLYING OF STAFF BY PUPILS, PARENTS/CARERS OR OTHER STAFF**

Bullying can occur between adults. Bullying tactics are sometimes employed in business, relationship between members of staff are sometimes characterised by bullying. Parents, teachers and other adults sometimes bully children and vice versa. Staff are sometimes bullied by parents. Staff as well as children benefit if school establishes an ethos that repudiates bullying. The Senior Leaders and Governors of the school strive to support the emotional health and well-being of the staff in the school and so we believe that all bullying incidents must be investigated. This includes any incident reported by a member of staff or being bullied by a child and or parent. Members of the school workforce suffering from or concerned about bullying can also contact their trade union or professional association for support and advice.

## **INVOLVING PARENTS**

The school has an open door policy and the staff will strive to speak with parents to discuss any concerns immediately. Parental involvement in the response process has been outlined in the Response to Bullying section above. Parental questionnaires will be completed annually.

## **ANTI-BULLYING COMPLAINTS**

If parents are unhappy about the way that an alleged bullying incident has been handled they should in the first instance speak with the class teacher, then the Leadership Team and Head Teacher. There is a School Complaints procedure if parents are still concerned. Parents will be advised of this procedure by the Head Teacher and a copy will be made available from the school office.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION THE POLICY**



- The policy will be part of the everyday life of the school. It will be maintained regularly through display of posters, curriculum, RE curriculum and assemblies/ liturgies.
- It will be a regular item on School and Class Council Agendas, at staff and Governors' meetings.
- Its effectiveness will be monitored through annual parent, pupil and staff questionnaires and reported incidents.
- The policy will be reviewed bi-annually.

More information can be found here –

**Anti-bullying Alliance (ABA)** - [www.anti-bullying.org](http://www.anti-bullying.org)

**Mencap** – [www.mencap.org](http://www.mencap.org)

**School's Out** – [www.schools-out.org.uk](http://www.schools-out.org.uk)

**Beatbullying** – [www.beatbullying.org.uk](http://www.beatbullying.org.uk)

**Childnet International** – [www.childnet-int.org](http://www.childnet-int.org)

